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ABSTRACT

Our culture draws lines between "races" in a variety of ways. Professional scholars and society in general each have their own set of aims and methods for dividing by race. The professional classifiers have been at times inconsistent and fallacious in their methods. The scientific classifiers (physical anthropologists, for example) assume an atmosphere of scientific objectivity and are unconcerned with how people classify themselves. They recognize a difference between a "pure race" and a racial hybrid. Social scientists, in contrast, have been almost totally concerned with what people think is their racial membership--and therefore the social scientists believe that racial taxonomies can change on the social level. But many social scientists are particularly concerned with those in power and what the empowered think is the racial membership of a particular person. In society at large, race has as much meaning as its members want it to. For cultural, economic, and political reasons, "white" and "black" historically have been radically polarized in the United States. Membership is ascribed at birth, is lifelong, and places one in conflict with the other group. Not surprisingly, the American racial definition system correlates highly with the oppression of blacks. In conclusion, the self-definition of race, and whether one feels positively about the race one is born into, can be very much influenced by what society says is right. (KH)

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# RACIAL DEFINITION HANDBOOK

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# Racial Definition Handbook

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To Angela

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although this pamphlet contains information found in my dissertation, the thrusts of the arguments presented herein are generated far outside the academic field. The perceptions concerning race relations found in this book, although they are well documented by scholars from a variety of disciplines, are shared by most persons of African-American origin that I know. I would like to extend my thanks to Joel Smith, Raymond Gavins, Ricardo Jaquez, Rafael Jaquez, Jeff E. Smith, Eddie H. Davis, Wanzo Hendrix, David C. Dennard, Bernard Brown and William J. Nelson, Sr.

WJN

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# FOREWORD

This pamphlet is meant to provide a connection between the various types of racial definitions. It is meant to be used as a handbook for those interested in a brief survey of the manners in which the concept of race has been studied and used by scientists and by laymen. It is hoped that a student of the social sciences (including education and political science) or the various sub-disciplines of anthropology, be he beginning or advanced, will be able to use this compendium to assume a command of the major uses and effects of the idea of race along with factors related to race. For the layman who has no formal acquaintance with the concept of race other than that of prevailing mores and folkways (this is especially meant for citizens of South Africa and the United States), it is hoped that this work can provide an illumination to what I consider the most explosive and intractable social concept of our time.

William J. Nelson
Raleigh, North Carolina
October, 1982

# UNIT 1

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

It has been my opinion that the concept of race has, for the most part, been one which has been studied from the opposite extremes of "scientific objectivity" on the one hand and blind acceptance of folk racial taxonomies on the other. Students of race have been, for the most part, scientists who have pursued, with unrelenting precision, the grouping of humans into genetically related populations or social scientists who have used racial terms such as "Black" and "White" to describe people who are neither color in actuality.

Both types of scholars have valid and defensible sets of reasons for their respective lines of inquiry but, paradoxically, they have often fallen into the types of traps suggested by their foci. Scientific classifiers of race frequently use their knowledge and skill related to genetics to pontificate on the "superiority" or "inferiority" of certain racial groups.[1] The social scientists, for their part, have attempted to avoid such pronouncements; however, they frequently display a remarkable lack of knowledge or recognition of the role of society in creating definitions of race for the very groups they describe. Thus, social scientists in the U.S. will often use words like "Hispanic" and "Black" to describe similar persons but will consider these groups different racial categories.

Interestingly, the two types of scholars, which I shall call the classifiers and the social scientists, often take what are essentially pot shots at each other, with the classifiers reminding the social scientists that there are more scientifically precise ways of discerning racial membership and the social scientists reminding the classifiers that they should not make inferences concerning intelligence or ability based on race because of the tremendous part environment plays in these qualities.[2]

Pierre van den Berghe (1967) provides our starting point by summarizing the various *types* of racial definitions. Each of the definitions he describes is meant to act as a viewpoint which would orient a scholar. The first and last of the four definitions, you will notice, would be used by the classifiers and the social scientists, respectively:

1. Physical anthropologists have called races the various sub-species of homo sapiens characterized by certain phenotypical and genotypical traits (e.g., the "Mongoloid race" or the "Negroid race"). They have not agreed among themselves, and biological classificiations of the human species include three to more than a score of such races. Belatedly, many physical anthropologists are abandoning racial taxonomies altogether.

2. Laymen have profusely used the word race to describe a human group that shared certain cultural characteristics such as a language or religion (e.g., the "French race" or the "Jewish race").

3. Race has been loosely used as a synonym for species (e.g., the "human race").

4. Many social scientists have meant by race a human group that defines itself and/or is defined by other groups as different from other groups by virtue of innate and immutable physical characteristics. These physical characteristics are in turn believed to be intrinsically related to moral, intellectual and other non-physical attributes or abilities. (van den Berghe, p. 9)

It is believed by this writer that the second and third definitions above have little meaning for our purposes other than to inform the reader of a particular viewpoint. Indeed, the third definition is almost a given and therefore non-problematic; the second definition does not connote physical differences that are passed on from generation to generation. It should come as no surprise, however, that the term "ethnic race" does carry with it significances which have been studied at length by all types of writers.[3]

The first and fourth terms of van den Berghe's paradigm imply that races so defined are associated with physical characteristics. It is my opinion that this physical dimension of race is the one which requires the most thorough treatments and has the most potential significances.

## Notes

[1] See John R. Baker, Race. Also Arthur Jensen, "How Much Can We Boost I.Q. and Scholastic Achievement."

[2] See Conrad Phillip Kottak, Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity, and Jim Haskins and Hugh F. Butts, The Psychology of Black Language.

[3] The great pogroms of the Nazis were campaings against ethnic races, although the Nazis themselves probably believed otherwise; similarly, the current circus of international crises revolves around collections of opposing "ethnic races" (e.g., Catholics versus Protestants in Northern Ireland, French Canadiens and Anglo-Canadians in Quebec, Jews and Arabs in the Middle East and Spanish Argentines versus Anglophiles in the Malvinas).

# CHAPTER 2

## The Classifiers

Early race classifiers who developed scientific classification schemes had a desire to group humans into a finite number of basic human types, each representing a collage of fixed physical and mental traits which would be passed on from generation to generation and whose permanence could only be diluted by mixing with other stocks (race mixture). Evidently, this desire still exists today because of the number of publications on the subject.[1]

According to Molnar (1975), the scientific classification of racial types grew out of the inquiries of Linnaeus who in 1735 developed a typology which grouped humans into four types: American (Reddish), European (White), Asiatic (Yellow) and Negro (Black). Linnaeus implied that man and apes were in the same family before a branching off occurred. Others in the 18th century developed similar taxonomies and in 1749 Buffon expanded the above taxonomy into six types.

A first order of business of these early physical anthropologists was to establish whether the various races evolved from a common ancestor (the monogenist view) or whether each race evolved separately (the polygenist view). These arguments went on for most of the 18th and 19th centuries and although the monogenist view was to later prevail, many classification schemes of this early period conspicuously had the white or caucasoid race at the top or near top.[2] Early classification schemes were based on (determined by) mostly phenotypical differences such as skin color, hair, shape of nose, etc.

Later, individuals such as Blumenbach, a German physician, and Samuel G. Morton, a describer of American Indians, were to emphasize the size and shape of the skull as an important determinant of race. A contemporary of Blumenbach, S. T. Soemmerring, made a study of Europeans and sub-Saharan Africans in the late 18th century in which not only the skull was examined but also the eyeball, eyesocket and other features. Anders Retzius in 1842 began examining the ratio between the length and breadth of the cranial vault of the skull. He referred to this as the cephalic index and was able to use this criterium to divide Europeans into dolicocephalic (long-headed), mesocephalic (medium-headed) and brachycephalic (broad-headed) groups. He also used the slope of the face to divide facial forms into orthognathic (non-sloping) and prognathic (sloping) groups. These criteria of face formation and skull ratios have been used until comparatively recently. Another racial classifier of the 19th century, Peschel, in 1876 used the following characteristics to evaluate racial membership: proportion of brain case, position of the jaw, root of nose, proportion of limbs, hair characteristics and skin pigment cells.

In 1923, Roland B. Dixon of Harvard (U.S.) in his book, Racial History of Man indicated that, in his opinion, the form of the head was the single most important and distinctive racial indicator. A scholastic peer of his, Ellsworth Huntington, similarly talked about the shape and form of the skull, also noting such things as cross-section of the hair and proportion of limbs.

Although the early race classifiers had some success in typing certain human groupings, they ran into three fundamentally related problems which have plagued classifiers of race until the present day:

1. All members of a group do not share all the same characteristics;
2. the varieties of man gradually run from one ideal type to another so that it is difficult to put boundaries between them;
3. contact between peoples in the era after the Renaissance has resulted in sexual contact between and among members of the various racial types, which of course results in racial hybridization.[3]

This would have an immediate effect on how any physical anthropologist would go about dividing the human population into races. What are the methods modern anthropologists use in determining race? How many races are there, according to physical anthropology?

Molnar (1975) answers our second question and in so doing provides a clue to how the first is answered by noting that there are at least five or six ways in which physical anthropologists define race (which would mean that the number of races is not fixed in modern physical anthropology)[4] and then citing the *one* thing that nevertheless unites all current scientific race classifiers: race is assumed by all modern theorists as constituting groups with a collection of genes which set them apart from another set of persons.

It is further assumed by most modern physical anthropologists that "race" constitutes a collection of persons geographically isolated enough so that the genetic characteristics which make it unique are passed on with little or no contamination. "Geographic isolation" in most cases would mean that which is related to the structure of the earth but it could also mean enforced isolation.[5]

Inasmuch as the problems stated and enumerated above have precluded using a single criterium such as skull formation as a positive indicator of racial membership, modern anthropologists have turned to the use of several variables *in addition* to blood groupings (indicators of gene pools): cranial formation, body features, skin color, hair form, eye color and stature. This is a multivariate approach. The 14 or so different race typologies that have been described in the 20th century have their rough basis in the early taxonomies described earlier in the chapter (Linnaeus and Blumenbach, etc.); however, they have usually designated the main groupings as stocks or major races and have further sub-divided these stocks into sub-groupings or local types.

The following classification typologies which are described provide a good example of the thoroughness and precision with which modern physical anthropologists have worked:

S. M. Garn (1961, 1971) has been a major force in the recent classification of races with his grouping of humans into geographic races, as Buettner-Janusch (1973) has pointed out. These geographic races are collections of Mendelian populations separated from other similarly based collections by major geographic barriers. These geographic races are in turn further divided into local races and micro races. There are, according to Garn, 9 geographic races, 30 local races and scores of micro races. Local

races are divisions, here, of the geographic races and micro races are distinct populations that are not clearly bounded (e.g., they are varieties and variations of local races which occur and are based on marriages and matings of individuals close to each other). Thus Africans of Nigeria would be classed in the African geographic race and the Forest Negro local race. Further division into microraces would follow based on locality and mating patterns. This taxonomy has proven to be very popular and has appeared in a number of physical anthropological discussions on race.[6] The basis for the above typology has been a series of multivariables such as gene pool or blood grouping, physical characteristics and geography.

W. C. Boyd, in his book Genetics and the Races of Man (1950), defined six races on the basis of certain blood type frequencies in addition to physical typographies. By 1963 he had increased his original six races to 13. These major races (be they 6 or 13) represented in many respects ideal types which encompassed a number of variations within each type.

Carleton Coon (1962) described five groups of mankind by using a mixed group of variables combining morphological traits (e.g., skin color, blood types and skeletal remains). These were further divided into a diversity of local races.

John Baker (1974) is mentioned here mainly to display the type of variables used in modern physical anthropological classification of race. In his description of some six racial groups (which is not meant by him to be inclusive of all humans on earth), Baker has used the following criteria for race evaluation: skull variables, internal organs, stature, body build, blood groups, facial features, scalp and hair characteristics and I.Q. Baker, interestingly, devotes a lot of energy to the discussion of race and intelligence. If I may offer a passing thought on the subject of race and intelligence or race and ability, it seems to me that, as the old modes of ascription have faded in human history (e.g., the concept of royalty, the boundaries of religious affiliation, the limiting of education to a few before mass education, etc.), the concept of race remains a waiting and willing concept to be used by those with ascriptive proclivities. Inasmuch as the normal distribution would be in effect regarding the distribution of intelligence in any of the racial categories mentioned by any theorist, a difference in average intelligence of a few I.Q. points would involve an overlap which would encompass all but a very few persons. Put differently, an Afro-American with an I.Q. of 135 is quite rare; however, that individual is still smarter than 98% of U.S. whites.

A. J. Kelso (1967, 1970) has discussed three ways in which races could be evaluated: through typological evaluation (e.g., what physical types are evidenced), through population evaluation which examines breeding populations through which genes are passed from generation to generation and through clinal evaluation in which geographic zones isolate populations and allow genetic characteristics to flow generationally with little contamination.[7]

The following are some visually displayed racial taxonomies which have hitherto been described verbally:

Some Racial Taxonomies
Garn (1961, 1971)

**Geographic races of homo sapiens**

| | |
|---|---|
| AMERINDIAN | From Alaska, North Canada and Labrador through all of the Americas to the tip of South America |
| POLYNESIAN | Pacific Islands, limited to area from New Zealand to Hawaii and Easter Island |
| MICRONESIAN | Pacific Islands, limited to area from Ulithi, Palau and Tobi to Marshall and Gilbert Islands |
| MELANESIAN-PAPUAN | New Guinea and neighboring islands |
| AUSTRALIAN | Australia |
| ASIATIC | Eastern continental Asia, Japan, Philippines, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Formosa |
| INDIAN | India, from the Himalayas to the tip of the Indian peninsula |
| EUROPEAN | Europe and Western Asia, the Middle East and Africa north of the Sahara |
| AFRICAN | Africa south of the Sahara |

**Local races of homo sapiens**

Eskimo
North American Indian
South American Indian
Central American Indian
Fuegian
Ladino
Neo-Hawaiian
Negrito
Murrayian Australian
Carpenterian Australian
Turkic
Iranian
North Chinese
Classic Mongoloid
Southeast Asiatic
Ainu
Hindu
Dravidian
Early European
North West European
Northeast European
Lapp
Alpine
Mediterranean
North American Colored
South American Colored
East African
Sudanese
Forest Negro
Bantu
Bushman and Hottentot
African Pygmy

Some Racial Taxonomies (continued)

**Boyd (1950)**

EARLY EUROPEAN
EUROPEAN
AFRICAN
ASIATIC
AMERICAN INDIAN
MONGOLOID

**Boyd (1963)**

EARLY EUROPEAN
LAPP
NORTH WEST EUROPEAN
EASTERN EUROPEAN
MEDITERRANEAN
AFRICAN
ASIAN, ASIATIC
INDO-DRAVIDIAN
AMERICAN INDIAN
INDONESIAN
MELANESIAN
POLYNESIAN
AUSTRALOID

**Coon (1962)**

Major races:

CAUCASOID
MONGOLOID
AUSTRALOID
CONGOID
CAPOID

Racial subdivisions:

| | |
|---|---|
| AUSTRALOID | can be divided into Negritos and Full-sized |
| CONGOID | can be divided into Negroes and Pygmies |
| CAPOID | can be divided into Bushmen and Hottentots |

As was stated, theorists have moved from the polygenist approach which states that races of men evolved from distinctly different species to the monogenist view which holds that man exhibits racial variation which can be attributed to forces alluded to earlier (e.g., breeding populations, gene pools, clines) and that all men evolved from a common ancestor.

This monogenist view is corroborated by the fact that major typologies of race in the modern era have included sub-races, some of which are blatant examples of hybridization which can be historically documented.[8] The subject of hybridization is one which is an anathema to the classifiers of race. One can devote reams of paper in classifying a German of the Stuttgart area of West Germany, for example, into a geographical race, local race or even a micro race. How would one, however, classify his son if he married a Cape Coloured lady who is the offspring of Europeans, Bantus and Malays? Even if a systematized way could be found to classify that one individual, into what racial category could he be put? It can be seen that the "North American Coloured" local race is in Garn's taxonomy of race. This scientific sounding term is really just a pseudonym for "Black" or "Afro-American" (Black and Afro-American are folk taxonomies with no "scientific" base). The seeming objectivity of the term "North American Colored" masks the fact that that group varies from those who are 100% West African in origin to those who are almost 100% European. Hybridization is a major reason behind the variance found among Blacks– how, realistically, would this group be scientifically evaluated?

The North American Colored group is not the only racial category found in Garn's taxonomy which is the result of the type of hybridization found here; the following are also, essentially, racial hybrids: South American Colored, Hottentot, and Neo-Hawaiian. An important point must be made concerning hybridization–the time element can be variable and the results can seem similar. An example is in order: Dominicans found on the island of Hispaniola are products of African and Spanish elements.[9] Thus an individual who is a native of the Dominican Republic could have brown skin, curly hair and thick features as could almost all of his collateral and lineal relatives.[10] A person in the Soviet Union who just happens to be the offspring of the Spanish ambassador and the ambassador of Angola would probably have the same appearance as our Dominican; however, the individual in the Soviet Union would have a vastly different array of collateral and lineal relatives.

The subject of hybridization is one which is a crucial one in the practice of the societal definition of race (which we shall see in the subsequent chapter) because frequently, societal definitions of race are quite rigid and there is nothing rigid in the way in which hybridization can create new racial categories. Hybridization accelerated on a grand scale with the discovery of the New World and the contact made between the European colonizers, the Amerindian natives and the African slaves.[11] Indeed, hybridization represents an element of the complicated matrix which joins together the social practices of ascription and inequality and the concept of race, which was and is, as we earlier noted, admirably suited to such practices.

**Questions**

1. Who was the first person to investigate scientific racial classification?
2. Who was the racial taxonomist who originated the terms dolicocephalic, mesocephalic and brachycephalic?
3. Explain the two points of view concerning the origin of the different races.
4. Who is the modern racial classifier who divided man into geographical races, local races and micro races?
5. What academic discipline is the one most prominent in modern scientific race classification?
6. Why is hybridization a complicating factor in scientific race classification?
7. What is the criterium used in classifying man that is the most popular in modern scientific race classification?
8. Why would racists (e.g., those who would base man's ability on inherited racial factors) possibly benefit from scientific race classification?

## Notes

[1] The United States is one society which is especially concerned with the subject of race. Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, noticed it almost 40 years ago. Not only is there an incredible amount of time and energy spent in the area of scientific race classification in the United States, but there is a corresponding zeal in the description of the socially derived racial categories preferred by the social scientists. Van den Berghe, Race and Racism, points out that "for every hundred published racial attitude studies done in the United States, we could perhaps find five to ten in all the rest of the world." Cf. p. 4.

[2] See Michael Biddess, Images of Race; also Stephen Molnar, Races, Types and Ethnic Groups and John Baker, Race.

[3] Edwin Byron Reuter, The Mulatto in the United States, and Race Mixture, has provided in-depth treatments of hybridization in the United States. Note the different tone and emphases (along with differnt *social* definitions of race) when compared to Gilberto Freyre, The Masters and the Slaves. See also Harry Hoetnik, Caribbean Race Relations: A Study of Two Variants. Hoetnik is writing on the subject of two different colonizing systems of the New World and their effect on the status of racial hybrids.

[4] Molnar, Op. Cit., mentions in the first chapter five or six different scientific racial definitions (e.g., what is race?) and identifies the theorist behind each definition. Modern classifiers have identified as few as three races to over thirty.

[5] It is certainly true that it is geographic isolation to be located in Australia and and "develop differently" from other races. It is also true that this isolation would prevent dilution of racial characteristics. Would not the same thing happen if two groups were located geographically near each other but were prohibited from intermarriage by law and/or custom? See Hoetnik, Op. Cit. See also some of the legislation of South Africa including the Mixed Marriages Act.

[6] See K. F. Dyer, The Biology of Racial Integration; also T. Dobzhansky, Mankind Evolving and John Buettner-Janusch, Physical Anthropology: A Perspective.

[7] See A. J. Kelso, "The Concept of Race," and Physical Anthropology: An Introduction.

[8] See Pierre van den Berghe, Race and Racism.

[9] See Harry Hoetnik, Caribbean Race Relations: A Study of Two Variants.

[10] Lineal relatives are "direct descendant" relatives such as grandparent, parent, son daughter. Collateral relatives are relatives such as uncle and aunt.

[11] Freyre, Op. Cit.

# CHAPTER 3

## The Social Scientists

The social scientists who have written about race in recent times have been thusly described by van den Berghe (1967):

> Much of the literature on race relations during the past three decades has dealt with the United States and has been written by scholars who lacked comparative experience. (van den Berghe, p. 4)

Further, he notes:

> The field of race relations has been generally characterized by a high degree of emphasis on practical policy applications, a low degree of theoretical integration with the rest of sociology, and a high degree of analytical isolation of race from its general social context. (van den Berghe, p. 6)

In plain English, he is saying that most writers of race in the social sciences have been more concerned with comparisons between groups defined as different races by the major institutions of a society and have not been interested in: a) the relationship of these definitions to their uses in society, b) the social nature of these definitions or c) the relative nature of these definitions (e.g., a person classed as Black in the U.S could become classed as Cape Coloured in South Africa and therefore non-Black). These social scientists have accepted at face value the terms of race given to them by laymen; having done so, they have simply proceeded to investigate differences between these groups. Notable exceptions, who, conspicuously, have been found in large numbers outside of the field of sociology, have been R. E. Park, Gunnar Myrdal, Oliver C. Cox, Marvin Harris, Niara Sudarkasa, Conrad Phillip Kottak, Pierre van den Berghe, E. Franklin Frazier, J. G. Mencke, Kenneth Stampp, Harry Hoetnik, Gilberto Freyre, Robert C. Reinders and Ira Berlin. Below are some actual titles featuring sociological treatments of race:

"As the Blacks Move In, the Ethnics Move Out"

"Where the Black Matriarchy Theorists Went Wrong"

"What America Would be Like Without Blacks"

"Husbands' Characteristics and Marital Disruption in Black Families"

"The Influence of Ascription, Achievement and Educational Expectations on Black-White Postsecondary Enrollment"

"Determinants of Black Suburbanization: A Systems Model"[1]

All of the above titles represent studies which make little or no attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How are races defined in the United States?
2. How are races defined in other cultures?
3. What are the determinants in the definitions of race?
   a. in the United States
   b. in other cultures
4. What is the relation, if any, between race and race definition and the structure of society?
5. How do race relations change over time?

What the above studies *have* done is to:

1. Assume that the reader is probably a white American who knows what a "Black" and what a "white" is;
2. Accept without question the basic dominant/subordinate relation between whites and Blacks;
3. Make no attempt to investigate the process by which the immigrants to the United States became only two races (white and Black) of importance when it has been shown that other cultures with similar histories of colonizing and slavery have become societies with many more than two races.
4. Make no attempt to investigate the social processes which ensure racial boundaries.
5. Display a peripheral interest in relative assimilation.
6. Describe groups which are assumed to be as real (and therefore as permanent and immutable) as the two sexes.

It is with this in mind that I have deemed it necessary to divide the social scientists who have worked with the concept of race into two fundamentally different groups: the analyzers and the simple describers. Taking the simple describers first, it is their forte to simply see that there are some races which seem to be so deemed by the members of a society and wonder about the things that happen between the races. This is akin to a person realizing that there are two sexes and wondering how they interact.

The following represents the type of wonderment which actuates the simple describers:

1. How do Black and white teenagers differ as to musical taste?
2. What are the different rates of divorce for whites and Blacks?
3. What are the different employment patterns for Blacks and whites?
4. What is the rate of church-going for Blacks as compared to whites?

It should come as no surprise that one who is constantly exposed to such academic works would come no closer to an understanding of the social definition of race than one who never studied sociology or any social science. It should also come as no surprise that those who prepare such materials for publication have no basic understanding of what race relations are.[2]

It was Robert E. Park who was one of the first to recognize the role of society in creating the conditions under which people come to see each other as members of a particular race. His writings provided a basis for social scientists to see that humans could not only be categorized according to scientific principles such as gene pool and blood grouping but that they could also be typed according to the designations given to them by society (social race). Further, as most social scientists would be quick to point out, these social races can have far more of an impact on the interaction of persons than scientific nomenclatures. If there is any one thing I would find at fault with the simple describers, other than the smugness that comes with lack of need to step outside of their own culture, it is that they really do not think of the difference between social race and biological race. Park, in his essay "The Nature of Race Relation" stated:

> Race relations, as that term is defined in use and wont in the United States, are relations existing between people distinguished by marks of racial descent, particularly when those differences enter into the consciousness of the individuals so distinguished and by so doing determine in each case the individual's concept of himself as well as his status in the community. Thus, anything that intensifies race consciousness, anything particularly if it is a permanent physical trait, that increases an individual's visibility and in so doing makes more obvious his identity with a particular ethnic unit or genetic group, tends to create and maintain the conditions under which race relations, as here defined, may be said to exist. Race consciousness, therefore, is to be regarded as a phenomenon, like class or caste consciousness, that enforces social distance. Race relations, in this sense, are not so much the relations that exist between individuals of different races as between individuals conscious of those differences. (Park, 1939, p. 3)[3]

Oliver C. Cox, in Class, Caste and Race (1948) provided a similar perspective:

> We may think of race relations, therefore, as that behavior which develops among peoples who are aware of each other's actual or imputed physical differences. Moreover, by race relations we do not mean all the social contacts between persons of different "races," but only those contacts the social characteristics of which are determined by a consciousness of "racial difference." If, for example, two persons of different racial strains were to meet and deal with each other on their own devices—that is to say without preoccupation with a social definition of each other's race—then it might be said that race here is of no sociological significance. (Cox, p. 320)

Further:

> . . . for the sociologist a race may be thought of as simply any group of people that is generally believed to be, and generally accepted as, a race in any given area of ethnic competition. Thus, if a man looks white, although, say in America he is everywhere called a Negro, he is, then, a Negro American. If, on the other hand, a man of identical physical appearance is recognized everywhere in Cuba as a white man, then he is a white Cuban. The sociologist is interested in the meanings and definitions a society gives to certain social phenomena and situations. (Cox, p. 319)

At this point, it should be pointed out that there is some relation between the scientific classification of race and the social classification. Even Park acknowledged the things like "marks of descent" and "physical difference" that are the hallmarks of the scientific classifiers. Modern social science thinking on race has been, as was stated, very much preoccupied with the relationships between and among the various social races of the New World, especially from 1500 on. The United States has received the bulk of attention on this subject. It is a known fact that Africans from West Africa (who, in Garn's taxonomy, would be in the African geographical race and Forest Negro local race) were imported as slaves to the New World.[4] Peter Wood (1974) documents at length the actual slave shipments to the port of Charleston during the colonial period of the United States. The place from which most of these slave shipments came was West Africa. Similarly, the European and Amerindian element in the population of the New World cannot be ignored (European and Amerindian geographic races in Garn's taxonomy).[5] How members of these racial stocks interacted from 1500 on is the interest of social scientists—those who are and have been sophisticated enough to examine the social nature of racial classification and definition have acknowledged that they are examining relations between Europeans and Africans, Europeans and Amerindians, Europeans and various racial hybrids and various relations between and among the myriad groups of hybrids as are deemed as significant by the society being

investigated.[6]

At this point, what can be said to comprise the difference or differences between the scientific classification of race and the social classification of race? The following differences should come to mind:

1. Racial classifiers using the scientific approach are unconcerned with how people classify themselves.
2. Scientific students of race assume that their categories represent actual differences which are real and cannot therefore be changed by legislation or social custom.
3. Scientific race classifiers recognize the difference between a "pure race" and a racial hybrid.
4. Scientific racial classifiers attempt to work in an atmosphere of total scientific objectivity.
5. Social theorists using the social science approach have been almost totally concerned with what people think is their racial membership. They are particularly concerned with *those in power* and what *they* think is the racial membership of a particular person.
6. They are therefore sensitive to the fact that racial taxonomies can change *on the social level* if enough significant people want them to– in that sense, social races are not real, *except* in the minds of society's members.
7. Social classifiers of race do not recognize the existence of hybrids (as in the case of Afro-Americans in the U.S.) *unless* any difference between hybrids and pure races is deemed sociologically significant (as it is in Latin America).[7]
8. Social scientists recognize that they are describing "races" that are arbitrary and essentially the creation of non-scientists.[8]

The social scientists have been concerned with the following questions concerning race relations after 1500:

1. How have members of different racial stocks behaved toward one another?
2. What, if any, have been the patterns of domination and subordination?
3. How have races been socially defined?
4. What relation has there been between the process of definition to structural processes?
5. What has been the status of racial hybrids?

A Comparison of Scientific versus Social Racial Typology

| Person | Scientific Race to which he belonged* | Social Race to which he belonged** |
|---|---|---|
| Ralph Bunche | North American Colored | Negro (in U.S.) |
| Perez Prado | South American Colored | White (in Cuba) |
| Will Rogers | European/Amerindian hybrid | White (in U.S.) |
| Adam Clayton Powell | North American Colored | Negro (in U.S.) |
| Anwar Sadat | Sudanese | White (in Egypt, U.S.) |
| Carl Sandburg | North West European | White (in U.S.) |
| Jeff Chandler | Mediterranean | White (in U.S.) |

*From S. M. Garn

**It is important to point out here that the sociologist of sophistication (not a simple describer) would explain the nature of these social definitions (e.g., their arbitrary character, the role society plays in their existence) *but* would still recognize those definitions as sociologically valid because *they are the bases for social action.*

**Questions**

1. Why would any social scientist be interested in race?
2. How are social scientists divided in this chapter with regard to the analysis of race?
3. What are the differences between social science race classification and scientific race classification?
4. Which type do you think is most rigid? Explain your view.
5. Relate the scenario of two persons of different scientific racial classifications interacting without regard for race to Robert E. Park; to Oliver C. Cox; to Pierre van den Berghe.
6. Which sets of persons below would be most likely to use the same type of race classification? Why?
   a. scientists and social scientists
   b. scientists and laymen
   c. laymen and social scientists

## Notes

[1] See bibliography for the exact references.

[2] The following quotation taken from Pierre van den Berghe serves to provide an essential criticism of such thinkers: "If I may perpetrate in conclusion a semantic abomination, I should say that this program is merely a general plea for historico-comparative macrosociology. This is hardly an original plea, and a number of scholars are doing what I suggest. But I believe that there is an imbalance in the allocation of intellectual and economic resources, favoring studies which use quantitative or experimental methods and which are minute and fragmentary in scope. This imbalance continues to prevail in spite of the fact that intellectual returns have clearly not been proportional to the money and time invested in the expensive search for quantitative trivia. The 'principal investigator' of the mammoth research project recalls the conquistador in quest of the mythical Eldorado. Like Cortes he returns with just enough gold to convince his peers and the foundations that there is a lot more to be found, and like Cortes, in the process of feeding social reality through gargantuan, fact-digesting computers, he often melts down priceless jewels into crude ingots." Quoted in van den Berghe, Race and Racism, p. 149.

[3] This writer had the occasion to try a small experiment. I instructed one of my U.S. white students to come to my home. I told him that he should say very little and move with an economy of motion. I then introduced him to some of my Afro-American friends as a fellow Black. Since he acted in a slightly bored and totally calm manner, my friends in turn accepted him as one of their own racial group, in spite of the fact that his physical appearance was significantly different from theirs.

[4] The musics of the Spanish and Portugese speaking peoples of the eastern coast of North and South America, as well as the musics of Afro-Americans and West Indians, are highly rhythmic, as is the music of West African peoples. Robert Palmer, in an introduction of the Brazilian musician Dom Um Romao writes: "In addition, three distinct African religions survived in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) as organized entities: the Orisha (Yoruba Gods from Nigeria), Cabula (Bantu or Congo and rain forest religions), and the Alufa, descendants of African muslims from the Sahel. Each religion had its own distinctive music, and its own instruments." Quoted from "Spirit of the Times" (liner notes to the Muse record). Interestingly, the various African-influenced musics of the peoples of the New World emphasize rhythm over melody; also almost all

displays the West African "call and response" pattern.

[5] Harry Hoetnik, The Dominican People 1850-1900: Notes for a Historical Sociology, takes a look at some of the various immigrants to that island nation. For a first-class treatment of the process of transforming Latin America from an Indian collage of nation-states and tribes into what it is today see Lewis F. Hanke (ed.), Latin America. See also the various census listings throughout U.S. history. They show place of origin for many U.S. whites.

[6] Almost all societies which have been examined extensively by modern sociologists have made a provision for the classification of "white." This grouping is assumed in all of the societies in question to be synonymous with "European." Further, this classification is assumed in most quarters to be an indicator of higher status; for this reason, the white reaction to any other group is salient. However, this is not to say that the other racial groups have not had problematic relations with each other: The following description by D'Alaux is an example, "The double layer of free (non-Negro) blood, that of the conquerers and that of the last remnants of the native population, which were mingled with that of the Africans, left so little room, after some two generations, for distinguishing (characteristics such as) the bronzed skin of the Spanish, the copper coloured skin of the Indian and the brown skin of the coloured, which looked so much like one and the same colour in the similar conditions of climate and hygiene, that interested observers would have had great difficulty, if they had been inclined to do so, in reading the secrets of geneology, lost in the fields and woods, from physical characteristics. The process of racial mingling, inhibited neither by European immigrants on moral nor by African immigrants on physiological grounds, was at the time of the Haitian revolution reflected in the following figures: 25,000 whites of purely Spanish descent; 15,000 Africans who were not subjected to any pressure or propaganda to rebel and who in any case were too proud of their social superiority to the slaves in the French part (of Hispaniola), to identify themselves with those whom in their pride they called Negroes, and 73,000 coloureds who claimed to be white and who, since they gave no cause for insulting objections from them (the whites), were ultimately regarded as such." This description of the Dominican Republic can be said to be prototypical of race relations among various racial groups which would occur throughout Latin America. Quoted from D'Alaux, L'Emperor.

[7] See Everett Stonequist, The Marginal Man for an extensive sociological description and analysis of racial hybrids. Those hybrids he describes (the Cape Coloured of South Africa, the Coloured People of Jamaica, etc.) are believed by him to have a different status in society because of their racial hybridity. He also diverges from my implication that the degree of racial hybridity in the U.S. has little sociological meaning.

[8] Conrad Phillip Kottak, Anthropology: The Exploration of Human Diversity plainly implores the layman and the social scientist to recognize that race definitions are as variable as the cultures involved. He states that racial definitions used by mem-

bers of society are completely arbitrary and devotes quite a bit of time in explaining the concept of hypodescent (which will be more fully explained later in this pamphlet), a device by which offspring from parents of two different races take the status in society of the lower status parent.

# UNIT 2

# CHAPTER 4

## Introduction II

As I earlier stated, the simple describers of race (e.g., those who wish to simply describe groups they take for granted as real) usually miss the boat in that they simply do not know the difference between the scientific and social dimensions of race. They do not recognize that race has meaning in society (and, therefore, has definition) only if it has some social significance.[1] The question can thus be put: why would race have any social significance whatsoever? We know what motivates the scientific classifiers of race (a desire to divide humans into groups which can be said to represent distinct genetic types); we know also what motivates the social scientists who deal with the subject of race (they recognize that it is the basis for types of behavior and, as such, wish to know more about it and how it influences the way people behave).

Why, however, would members of society take the time to classify each other on the basis of race? It is plain that they are not in it for the scientific "quest for truth" as have been the scientific classifiers. Nor are most members of society as curious about their fellow man as social scientific theorists. Laymen in society do not get paid salaries to theorize on race as do both the scientific classifiers and the social scientists. History is full of examples of unequal (and equal) treatments of strangers or those who were somehow "different," but has this treatment always been on the basis of race? Cox (1948) and a number of theorists through the years have certainly not thought so.[2] Moreover, if races were "supposed" to interact with one another in a set way we could assume that:

1. societies do not classify races, they simply exist;
2. the same classifications would therefore exist everywhere there were genetically similar peoples.

We know that societies classify people into races based in part on custom but also to a large degree on legislation.[3] We have already objectively seen that similarly appearing persons can be socially classed into different races in different societies.[4] It seems applicable at this point to use the functional approach and ask just what use the definition of its members by race would have for any society. Also, do racial definitions in society take on a life of their own in helping maintain the very conditions which create them in the first place (although this question sounds complicated because of its novelty, it is not farfetched; consider this question: does a high-crime neighborhood help create conditions that perpetuate crime by driving away employers and other positive influences?)?

Racial definition by a society could have the following uses:

1. Society could function better with its members defined by race.
2. To use the conflict model, which is almost a photographic negative of functionalism, society's most powerful sectors could desire its members to be defined by race.
3. Racial definition could exist simply to label persons who appeared to vary physically.

It is my feeling that the formulations of Harry Hoetnik (1971) are of use here. In his book, Caribbean Race Relations: A Study of Two Variants, Hoetnik identifies two racial definition systems, the Iberian system and the Northern European system. As for the uses for racial definition, it is plain, from reading his theory, that the Iberian system corresponds to number (3) above and that the Northern European system corresponds to number (2). Simply put, both these racial variants are those existing in societies characterized by contact between Europeans and Africans.[5] The Northern European variant (exhibited in the societies of the United States and the British West Indies) has implemented a rigid caste-like line dividing those of African descent and whites (those with no African ancestry). Intermarriage is frowned upon and the genetic makeup of these two groups is expected to remain the same for a long time.[6] The Iberian variant (found in the Latin societies of the New World in which there have been high percentages of Indians and Africans) has displayed a myriad of racial types as *defined by society*; a high degree of intermarriage among people of all physical types always has occurred and the categories themseives have been fluid (e.g., a person white in 1925 could easily have been coloured or mulato in 1920 and could again become mestizo in 1930).

Thus, to answer our original question, members of society classify each other by race if a) physical types different enough to be distinguishable exist and b) if enough members of society care enough to do so. How they would care and why they would care would depend on the characteristics of that society; van den Berghe (1967, 1976) was fully aware of this fact when he said that both the United States and Brazil had populations with similar genetic antecedents and then investigated the reasons why race relations and labelings were different in the two countries. Among the reasons he gave were:

1. The religions of the two societies influenced the type of treatment accorded Africans.
2. The harsher type of slavery in the United States was a factor.
3. Slavery was more important, economically, in the United States.
4. Manumission was more frequent in Brazil.
5. There was a greater acceptance of intermarriage in Brazil.

It seems evident that a Brazilian, even if he were disposed to define the race of his fellow countryman, would probably do it for a different motivational scheme than an American. The United States remains one of the most paradoxical and yet compelling laboratories of racial definition in the world. On the one hand, the American folklore is one of "freedom" and "equality," yet Americans have operated one of the most caste-like and ascriptive racial definition systems on this planet. Because the U.S. is such an ideal type of the ascriptive nature of racial definition and because it is so far along one extreme, it has been decided to exhibit the United States, along with a comparison society, as an example of society racially defining itself.

Before we go into the example of these two societies, I wish to express the opinion that we are looking at two *systems* of societal racial definition. By systems I mean that a *provision is made in the culture* before a person is even born for assigning him or her to a racial group. Here, the definition of society is what is important (e.g., how is that person classified by significant others– what a person thinks of himself is of secondary importance in this definitional sense). Many simple describers cloud the issue by asserting that society assigns people to other categories such as sex and that race is a similar phenomenon. Certainly, the simple describers, with their lack of sophistication and limited insight, would have us believe that the two designations (sex and race) are equally as real; however, I know of no society that has created the two sexes– I know of no society which has made a regular practice of defining sex membership through legislation or custom: in the Dominican Republic, which has an African and Spanish gene pool, there are many "races" (social races) used to describe the various combinations of African and Spanish blood (but only two sexes). In the United States, which has an Anglo-Saxon and African gene pool (among others), there are only two "races" (social races) of importance in the entire society and only one "race" used to designate any combination of African and Anglo-Saxon blood (yet only two sexes).

If a provision is made, through law or custom, we know that a society has had that concept for which the provision is made on its collective mind in some sense. Perhaps it is for different reasons. A country like Japan which has an infinitesimal number of those who are physically different may not need to implement a regulated system of racial definition. It should also be plain to the observant that the status of racial hybrids enters into this picture significantly.

Let us go back to another earlier question. What are the *effects* of racial definitions on the actions and thoughts of the members of society? Growing up in a society with enemies designated by racial membership is bound to have all kinds of implications: who is beautiful, who is powerful, who can be trusted, who is smart and who is an insider or outsider.

The following two chapters, therefore, go into first, the ways in which a society provides for defining people by race. This is essentially a macro-sociological enterprise. We are looking at society in its holistic sense and we are only peripherally concerned with motivations of any one individual to define or react to definition. Secondly we will look at the effects of society's racial definitions on people. What do people think of themselves and how does racial definition influence self conceptions and conceptions of others?

This is an excursion into micro-sociology and, indeed, this is what the simple describers do best.[7] I myself had to wait until I was almost 26 years of age until I found that there was another way of looking at race other than chronicling prejudices exhibited by U.S. whites. Noel Gist's excellent analysis of the problems of the Anglo-Indians was lost on me until I developed the sophistication to see beyond the narrow confines of describing U.S. Black/white conflicts. I kept saying to myself: "what do the Anglo-Indians have to worry about? They can always pass for white in the United States."[8]

## Notes

[1] According to theorists such as O. C. Cox, Class, Caste and Race, race began to assume importance in the New World because of economics and, specifically, because of capitalism. He observed, "Sometimes, probably because of its very obviousness, it is not realized that the slave trade was simply a way of recruiting (a pool of) labor for the purpose of exploiting the great natural resources of America. This trade did not develop because the Indians and Negroes were red or black or because their cranial capacity averaged a certain number of cubic centimeters; but simply because they were the best workers to be found for the heavy labor in the mines and plantations across the Atlantic. If white workers were available in sufficient numbers they would have been substituted. As a matter of fact, part of the early demand for labor in the West Indies and on the mainland was filled by white servants, who were sometimes defined in exactly the same terms as those used to characterize the Africans. Although the recruitment of involuntary labor finally settled down to the African coasts, the earlier kidnapers did a brisk business in some of the most enlightened European cities. Moreover, in the process of exploiting the natural resources of the West Indies, the Spanish conquistadores literally consumed (amalgamated with) the native Indian population. This, then, is the beginning of modern race relations. It was not an abstract, natural, immemorial feeling of mutual antipathy between groups, but rather a practical exploitative relationship with its socio-attitudinal facilitation– at that time only nascent race prejudice." Quoted in Cox p. 332. See also Marvin Harris, Patterns of Race in the Americas.

[2] Cox, Op. Cit., talks about the non-racial nature of interactions between invaders and the conquered in antiquity.

[3] See D. P. Bell, Race, Racism and American Law; also A. L. Higgenbotham, In the Matter of Color. See also G. M. Carter, The Politics of Inequality, South Africa Since 1948 and P. L. van den Berghe, "Miscegenation in South Africa." For a look at the U.S. before the modern era see also Robert C. Reinders, End of an Era and Donald E. Everett, "Demands of the New Orleans Free Coloured Population for Political Equality, 1862-1865." Everett talks about these legislative definitional enactments and the efforts of a racial group in the United States to have their racial membership defined differently by the societal definers (courts and customs) where they lived.

[4] In addition to Cox, Op. Cit., see Ira Berlin, Slaves Without Masters. Berlin talks about the immigration to the United States of thousands of persons of African and European descent who were classified as "coloured" in Sainte Dominque around 1800. In the U.S. their descendants were to be later classed as "Negro." See also his article "The Structure of the Free Negro Caste in the Ante Bellum United States."

[5] C. Wagley, "Plantation America, A Culture Sphere," described the entire east coast of the Americas, from the Southern U.S. through the Caribbean and down through the Central American area and the Guianas and extending to the Brazilian coast, as one which, in the colonial (settlement) period, was a collage of plantation societies with African, Indian and European elements.

[6] Harry Hoetnik, Caribbean Race Relations. See also P. L. van den Berghe, "The African Diaspora in Mexico, Brazil and the United States."

[7] A good example of the type of limited scope common to the simple describers can be evidenced by the following conclusion from Elliot Liebow in a nonanalytical, simple description book: "Since the great power lies with the white middle class, great decisions have to be made as to how this power is to be used in responding to action and demands initiated by the Negro masses and articulated by their leaders. Most of the time, the great federal power will best be used in direct support of the actionists. On some occasions, such as the outbreak at Watts, restraint will be the most judicious if difficult use of that great power. In searching for guidelines to help us shape our responses, we would do well to keep in mind W. H. Auden's admonition to twentieth century man: 'We must love one another or die.' Perhaps this is too much to ask of ourselves and others. Perhaps it will be enough if we just act as if we do." Quoted from Liebow, Tally's Corner, p. 231. If one were to take this train of thought to its sociological conclusion, we would surmise that the Egyptians, since they have fewer racially-related problems than the South Africans, are more "loving people." Moreover, Liebow's analysis makes no provision for the origin of the prejudice he describes.

[8] See Noel P. Gist, "Cultural Versus Social Marginality: The Anglo-Indian Case" and Stonequist, The Marginal Man.

# CHAPTER 5

### Society Defining its Members

In order to accurately assess the dynamics of relationships between members of different U.S. Racial groups, a useful and often overlooked subject area concerns the very definitions of the "white" and Afro-American groups, along with racial boundaries and how these boundaries are maintained.

Basic definitions of race in the U.S. concerning Africans and their descendants and whites have been in existence since colonial times and have been relatively similar over the years. The line of demarcation between African-Americans and whites is chiefly a line which is socially drawn and biologically imputed (e.g., thought, in the folk taxonomic scheme of the U.S., to be directly related to biological or genetic traits) for the following reasons:

1. Physical traits are associated with differences between the two groups.
2. These physical differences are assumed to be passed on, biologically, from generation to generation by most members of society.[1]

The folk definition of an African-American (e.g., "North American Colored" in Garn's Local Race typology) is as follows: any person with any sub-Saharan African ancestry whatsoever. Certain legislative decisions have attempted to stipulate the acceptable fractional amounts of African ancestry (African, in Garn's Geographical Race typology) which would designate African-American membership (Bell, 1973). For the most part, however, persons with any stipulated or recognized amounts of African ancestry have been relegated to the African-American caste *by whites.*[2] Kottak (1978) has described this phenomenon as *hypodescent* in which the following characteristics are in evidence:

1. Race is determined at birth.
2. Children of a higher caste (European) parent and a lower caste (African or African-American) are relegated to the status of the lower caste parent.
3. Persons having any African ancestry, no matter how remote, are ascribed membership in the African-American group.
4. Whites are free from African ancestry.

A side effect of this racial definition policy has been the inclusion in the African-American group of individuals of mostly European ancestry.[3] In fact, Stuckert (1958) has suggested that a sizable percentage of the white population possesses African ancestry although this is secret and unacknowledged. Similarly, if ancestry from Africa cuts off membership in the white group of persons who are otherwise acculturated into American society and its system of values and beliefs, the African-American group would be seen to possess many persons who are culturally similar to whites in terms of their institutions, educational practices and even their basic values. One factor which has influenced this is what van den Berghe (1967) has described as the tremendous effort made by whites to try to stamp out the indigenous West African culture of the newly arrived slaves.

Racial definition, as well as the factors which are associated with such definitions are mutually influential—that is, racial definitions do not operate in a vacuum, nor can they be said to have originated with no observable causes. Social practices are and have been involved in the operationalization of the U.S. racial classification scheme with regard to African-Americans and whites:

1. Membership in both groups is ascribed and automatic.
2. Racial membership is thought to be based on biological traits.
3. Hypodescent ensures the maintenance of this separation.

According to Ralph Linton (1936), statuses can be divided into ascribed and achieved; Inkeles (1964) has observed "Ascribed status positions are those to which individuals are more or less automatically assigned on the basis of accidents of birth . . . achieved status positions are those in which a person is placed because of some action or attainment on his part." (Inkeles, p. 67). In the U.S., racial memberships in the white or African-American categories are typically for life.[4] Here, such an "unchanging" and ascriptive dimension in the racial classification system implies a rigidity and intractability.

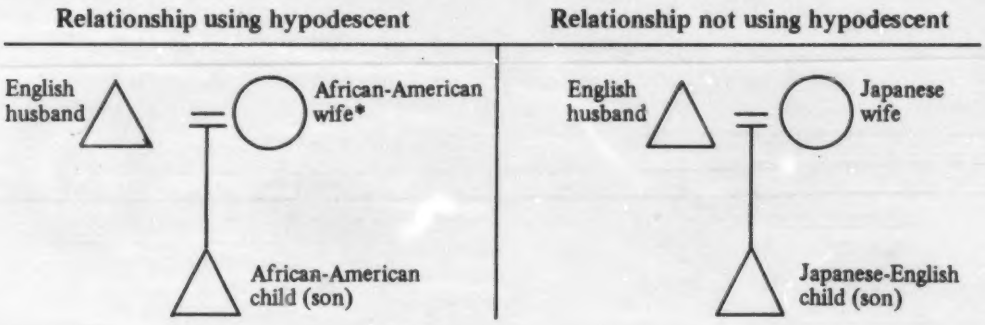
As we have observed, Americans have connected racial membership with biological characteristics in spite of the fact that African-Americans and whites may look the same in some instances and the fact that variation within the white group is at least as great as the difference between any one white and any one African-American.[5] African-Americans and whites interact as representatives of distinct biological/social groups rather than as individuals who may happen to look different.

These social groups are divided by imputed African ancestry. One side is perceived to have African ancestry and the other side is perceived to have none. An example of the inconsistencies that can arise from this type of social arrangement is the present-day spectacle of seeing the fellowship and comradery of a nordic Swedish-American and a swarthy Iltalian-American and their common mistrust of African-Americans who range from ebony to blond. American social practice has, thoughout that nation's history, tended to minimize any other factors which may have separated African-Americans

and whites and focused instead on biological factors such as the presence or absence of African ancestry which, because it is "biological," is thought to be unchanging and rigid. Although certain observations regarding the differences in actions, average income, speech patterns, cleanliness or music may be made concerning African-Amercans and whites, these have never been as important to the American mind as the perception of physiological or racial difference.[6]

Hypodescent has always been the real crux of the U.S. racial classification system. Without hypodescent, this system would have had far more difficulty functioning. Hypodescent does several things necessary for the maintenance of a strict and rigid racial dichotomy. First, it has effectively stratified the U.S. into easily discernable racial groups—no middle ground. Second, it eliminates African ancestry from the white population—what African ancestry which clandestinely makes its way into the white population is unacknowledged. Third, it discourages intermarriage (in which sexual relations and descent are *legitimized*). This is not to say that interracial sex is uncommon or even undesirable in the United States: interracial sex can involve exploitation or simple pleasure—it does not necessarily connote respect or friendship.

Diagram of hypodescent in action:




△ . . . stands for male

○ . . . stands for female

= . . . stands for sexual relation/marriage

| . . . stands for "descended from"

*African-American, Afro-American, Negro and Black are all synonyms.

The African-American and white groups which have confronted each other have been well-defined, corporate entities and, as such, have factors going back into their creation reaching far back into colonial times.[7] There are intertwining influences in U.S. colonial life accounting for the genesis of the color concept and hypodescent; to characterize as "racist" colonial society and then pronounce the awesome racial divisions of the United States as being caused by "racism" risks oversimplifying a process begun by English settlers in the 17th century. Although the Civil War came to be fought by what would be known as the "free" states versus the "slave" states, the American colonies were uniform with regard to the cultural traditions of the English settlers concerning Africans. These settlers began colonizing the Eastern Seaboard using a variety of laborers–Indian, European and African (Stampp, 1956). Because of a number of factors, chief of which was economics and visible difference, the colonists eventually settled into a pattern of relations in which black skin was synonymous with the status of servitude (Higgenbotham, 1978); thus, while white indentured servants were employed in the colonies, legal codes favored rights and manumission of whites and penalties and servitude of Blacks (Higgenbotham). I wish to emphasize at this point that the overwhelming tendency would be to look at this process as being part of some grand strategy although there is disagreement by various writers. Stampp has described the easy comradery and intermingling of the first indentured servants (both white and African) in the U.S. colonies:

> Like white servants, some of them (Blacks) gained their freedom after serving a term of years or after conversion to Christianity. If their bondage tended to be more severe, their terms of service longer or even of indefinite duration, this merely indicated that attractive inducements did not have to be held out to the servants whose coming to America was not a matter of choice. Moreover, the Negro and white servants of the seventeenth century seemed to be remarkably unconcerned about their visible differences. They toiled together in the fields, fraternized during leisure hours and, in and out of wedlock, collaborated in siring a numberous progeny. (Stampp, p. 21-22)

In what some may see as a step-by-step process, legal statutes over the years evolved with the purpose of maintaining Black servitude. It should come as no surprise to anyone that the U.S. racial definition system has been one which can be highly correlated with oppression. Gordon Allport (1954) has made a complex connection between the status of Blacks in America and caste membership, noting such things as prohibition of intermarriage, restriction of mobility and the arbitrary nature of membership in the African-American group. If persons of different colors had a built-in mechanism prohibiting sexual contact, discussion of classification or race would have less meaning. Boundaries would be less problematic. However, in the colonies there appeared from the beginning sexual contact between Europeans and Africans, and, of

course, there were offspring. How were these offspring to be classed/defined? Definition thus becomes sociologically problematical. The broad, intertwining forces accounting for the type of racial classification the colonies were to invent come under three headings–cultural, economic and political–and are explained as follows:

1. Cultural aversion: This heading refers to factors in race relations which are less amenable to objective observation and, in my opinion, is the least important of the three; nevertheless, note has been made of the preoccupation of Americans of European descent with maintaining ancestry undiluted by African blood. Jordan (1968) notes that colonists asked themselves if a "blackened" people could look back to Europe and say that they faithfully performed their task. African ancestry, therefore, was, to the colonists, a darkening agent capable of rendering an entire nation into a motley group of hybrids.[8]

2. Economic necessity: Because of the ready availability of African women for sexually exploitative purposes, a problem arose during the colonial period for white men, particularly slaveholders: the knotty problem of the legal status of offspring; the question arose whether or not the mixed offspring would be heir to the father's status and/or wealth. Although English legal doctrine supposedly provided that a son's inheritance was determined by the status of the father, this rule was changed in order to a) circumscribe wealth to the white group, b) eliminate freedom for half-castes and c) reproduce slaves without having to import as many (Higgenbotham, 1978). As Higgenbotham himself notes, after 1691, several other statutes were written into effect to account for exceptions to the above doctrine change and to ultimately provide for a rigid color line.

3. Cooptation of poorer whites: The slave masters did not want alliances between poorer whites and Africans and their descendants; a political strategy had to be found to nullify this possibility. Poorer whites were urged to be loyal to their race rather than their financial status or even their status of servitude (Higgenbotham). Pure white ancestry, undiluted with African blood thus became the poor white's greatest possession (and one actively exploited), for it had the effect of giving him a built-in claim to superior social status: this was bolstered by a legal system which provided a mild form of jurisprudence for whites and a harsh one for Africans and those of African descent. Describing colonial South Carolina, Higgenbotham remarks: "For if the white poor were to disregard the difference in the color of skin and unite with the enslaved Black against those who exploited both poor whites and all Blacks, the power of the master class would diminish." (Higgenbotham, p. 158)[9]

These forces, which served to propel the American concept of race definition into existence, were greatly aided by a continuing need for economic and political exploita-

tion of Africans and African-Americans in the period following the Revolutionary War. Slavery was to continue to be a profitable business (Stampp, 1956); the hypodescent or "one drop of blood" rule was to have still another boost—by scientific and socioscientific defenders of this line of reasoning. In this sense, we have come full circle from the classifiers to social scientists to society and back to classifiers; for, if there were any other motivating force that did (or does) propel the classifiers in their relentless push for the scientific accuracy of their racial taxonomies besides the "quest for truth," it would be a deep-seated racist personal ethos and a desire to justify it legitimately (which, in this case, would be "scientifically").

The racial thinkers of this post-Revolutionary period in the U.S. held that Africans and African-Americans represented a distinct species of man and warned that any intermixture of whites and Africans would result in inferior mulattoes. Under no circumstances could anyone of this inferior stock be allowed to intermingle among or have equal status with whites. Mencke (1979) observed:

> These notions also explain at least one reason for white perceptions of mulattoes as Negroes. Even though mixed bloods who were ostensibly white in appearance, still (they) carried in their blood the savage traits of their African ancestors. Those ancestors might be many generations removed, but the basic characteristics remained, lurking beneath the white skin and straight hair and ultimately guiding many of the actions, attitudes and sensibilities of the mulatto. Furthermore, these black traits might one day reappear unexpectedly in an atavistic child, one whose parents were white but who itself evidenced strong Negro characteristics. It was this sort of thinking, based on notions of racial essences and the interworkings of socio-cultural and biological processes, which was at the heart of the "one drop of blood" rule. One drop of black blood, carrying as it did these myriad undesirable characteristics, was enough to brand its possessor as a child of Africa, with all the connotations of savagery and sensuality which such a designation inherently involved in the white mind. There seemed little inclination to question the power of these African traits to overwhelm the civilized white traits which flowed in the blood of the lightest mulatto. The ideas fit together in a powerful argument against racial amalgamation as well as any political policy which smacked of the "social equality" which necessarily implied intermarriage in the minds of whites. (Mencke, p. 61)[10]

The patterns of race relations which exist in the United States today, therefore, are logical extensions of practices and customs in U.S. history and can be said to affect racial definition on the following ways:

1. The racial line of demarcation between African-Americans and whites separate groups which are, essentially, in a conflict relationship with each other.
2. Social rules are drawn up in the U.S. to insure that the two groups remain separate and distinct corporate entities.
3. There is, typically, a lifelong and ascribed membership in these groups.
4. This definitional system was invented by whites and maintained for the purpose of whites; concommitantly it still holds benefits for whites for reasons similar (economic exploitation, cooptation of poorer whites) to those given concerning colonial times.
5. This system is only peripherally concerned with how African-Americans define themselves.
6. This definitional system is associated with major societal institutions in its maintenance, justification and enforcement.
7. This system is renewed with the socialization process in the U.S.[11]

It is not within the scope of this pamphlet to provide an in-depth description of societies being compared, therefore my description of the Dominican Republic (the society chosen to compare with the U.S. with regard to race relations) will only feature points designed to *contrast against* what was imputed for the U.S.

First, the Dominican Republic had the same forces of slavery and colonization to contend with as the U.S. However, they had instituted a concept of "racial democracy" (Peguero and de los Santos, 1981) which had been the outgrowth of economic, religious and cultural policies which had differed from the U.S. In addition, the demographic makeup of the Dominican Republic has been different than that of the U.S. Stonequist has observed in the Marginal Man (1937) that U.S. whites could afford to exclude so many near-whites from their group because they constituted such a clear majority in the population. The Dominican people, with a racial gene pool of almost equal amounts of African and Spanish blood, could not similarly afford to do this, if they were going to use the concept of democracy to describe their society. The Dominican Republic exhibits the following features which contrast with those of the U.S.:

1. It does not practice hypodescent.
2. If race is determined at birth, it is usually in church records rather than by government (state and/or federal) officials.
3. Race can be changed during a person's lifetime.

4. There are many folk classifications used to describe the various combinations of African and Spanish, African and Indian and African-Indian-Spanish (e.g., Indio, Mulato, Mestizo, Blanco, Africano, etc.).

5. Membership in the Dominican culture (e.g., being a Dominican) is more important than racial membership.[12]

An observer, when presented with the preceding comparison, just might ask, "so what?" Certainly it is true that there are many race schemes in different countries of the world. It might seem pointless to make what on the surface simply looks like a chronicle of different races in different countries. After all, there are the Tatars of the Soviet Union, the Tamil of India, the Fijians of the South Seas and the Aborigines of Australia in the vast panorama of the worlds races; would not our comparison of the U.S. and the Dominican Republic be the same as comparing India and China? The fundamental difference is that the populations of the U.S. and the Dominican Republic contain people with similar phenotypes and genotypes which would be racially defined differently depending on which country they were in at the time. If Ernest Morial, the Black major of New Orleans (U.S.) were to move to Santiago, Dominican Republic, his race would change to one of the following, depending on what set of people he were around:

1. Blanco
2. Mulato
3. Mestizo
4. Human

Some African-Americans

**Questions**

1. What benefit could the ascription of all persons of African descent into a lower caste status have for poorer whites?
2. Explain hypodescent.
3. Relate the "one drop of blood" social practice to hypodescent.
4. Why could the United States afford to practice hypodescent without losing white strength?
5. Are the racial divisions discussed in this chapter based on cultural differences or arbitrary differences decreed by society as valid? Explain your view.
6. Why would the practice of hypodescent discourage intermarriage between African-Americans and whites?
7. It has been pointed out that millions of whites in the U.S. have African ancestry. Why would this be something that whites would not acknowledge?
8. Can you think of alternative motivations (besides the ones given in this pamphlet) for:
   a) scientific race classification theorists?
   b) social science race analysts?
   c) societal race classifiers?
9. Relate scientific race classification to societal race classification.
   a) with regard to control of groups of people
   b) with regard to motivations to classify people

## Notes

[1] The overwhelming reaction of whites to African ancestry is fear, suggesting that whites are afraid of Blacks more than Blacks are of whites. Genetic relations with Blacks are taboo for whites.

[2] This is the "one drop of blood" rule of U.S. folklore. U.S. racial classification puts persons in "either-or" positions.

[3] Goldsby, Race and Races, noted that West Africans and African-Americans diverged with regard to certain traits.

[4] Kottak, Anthropology, has observed, in his research on Brazil, that persons there were noticably less rigid about racial classification, in many cases being in situations where their racial classifications changed week to week or from day to day. Racial classification in the U.S. corresponds to Gist's "Cultural Versus Social Marginality" conception of social rather than cultural classification.

[5] The late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat was considered white by American society. Taking his phenotype as one pole and a blond, blue-eyed nordic type as the other pole, one can readily see the tremendous variation *within* the white group. The late Adam Clayton Powell and the present-day Black politician Julian Bond fall within this range.

[6] Trying to "act white" has never drawn African-Americans, as a group, any closer to whites, suggesting that the differences perceived by the two groups are caste-related rather than simply cultural. In fact, African-Americans who go out of their way to act foreign have often been accorded greater respect from whites than those who would attempt to emulate whites.

[7] Most modern cultural anthropologists have distinguished between corporate groups and non-corporate groups to describe classifications of people. A member of a corporate group *represents* his group.

[8] Comparatively recently in U.S. history, a Virginia court in 1959 sounded a continuation of this line of reasoning. The decision, against an interracial marriage, cites as its purpose a desire to preserve "white integrity" from a "mongrel breed of citizens." Taken from Bell, Race, Racism and American Law.

[9] Harry Hoetnik, Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas: Comparative Notes on Their Nature and Nexus, seems to feel that this influence is a significant one in explaining the dual racial system of the United States (that of two caste-like races with no middle grounds). On pages 14-17 he describes an Ante Bellum and early Reconstruction situation in the American South in which poor whites, very much aware that the central thing that provided status for themselves was their "pure white" ancestry, acted as policemen of sorts for the white gentry (which was ever fearful of slave uprisings) to control Blacks. He also asserts that these poor whites were quite the majority in the Southern population of non-slaves. Wealthy whites, therefore, though they were in a small minority, had, in the Southern U.S., a ready supply of willing allies from "pure whites" without having to include those with African ancestry in their ranks. Eugene D. Genovese, Roll Jordan, Roll discusses the two-tiered race system in the Old South.

[10] Pierre van den Berghe, "The African Diaspora in Mexico, Brazil and the United States," and William Megenney, "The Black Puerto Rican, An Analysis of Racial Attitudes" have noted, like Hoetnik, that Latin societies have had racist origins, and, in fact, provide numerous examples of discrimination. The chief difference in why the U.S. is more viscerally racist is identified by these writers as the rigid hypodescent line.

[11] An extreme example of the rigidity of racial classification and definition blinding one to similarities can be found in Ebony (ed.) "The White Man Who Couldn't be White." Here, the article describes a young South African white man turned darker because of a glandular problem. His family and friends disowned him.

[12] See Valentina Peguero and Danilo de los Santos, Vision General de la Historia Dominicana, R. Logan, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Harry Hoetnik, The Dominican People 1850-1900: Notes for a Historical Sociology, Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas.

# CHAPTER 6

## Self Definition

The quotation we earlier gave by D'Alaux in which he talks about the 73,000 coloureds who *called themselves white* suggests that self-definition of race is a separate phenomena from definition imposed by others. That self-definition is an important concept with regard to race is evidenced by Kardiner (1951) as well as a host of others who have attempted to gauge the self concept of Blacks in the United States and relate that self concept to their racial membership.

Since this is a handbook with the expressed purpose of locating and connecting concepts related to race definition, extensive treatment of the self-definition of race is not my aim; rather, I wish to identify the types of self-definition of race which are likely based on the societal definition:

1. If one is living in a society in which the race to which he belongs is stigmatized, negative self image may result.[1]

2. If one is living in a society in which the race to which he belongs is one of high status, a positive and/or guilt ridden self image may result.[2]

3. If one is living in a society in which the race to which he belongs does not matter, race is of no consequence with regard to self definition.[3]

4. (1) and (2) relate to self concept rather than simply saying to one's self "I am a member of a racial group." This is similar to a man's dual impression of his height: "I'm 5'11" on the one hand and "I'm average but slightly tall; this is a great height to be" on the other. Obviously, the self concept variant of racial definition can be very much influenced by what society says is right.

Although, in the U.S., societal definition has been touted as negatively influencing the self concept, a number of other writers, operating on the assumption that African-Americans are oriented around primary group relations among themselves, have posited that Blacks could care less about what whites think.[4] In a more emotional prose, Malcolm X expressed a similar thought:

> Few white people realize that many Black people today dislike and avoid spending any more time than they must around white people. This "integration" image, as it is popularly interpreted, has millions of vain, self-exalted white people convinced that black people want to sleep in bed with them. (Haley, 1965, p. 273)

In a similar, qualitatively researched book, Gwaltney (1980) probed some of the thoughts of African-Americans. One thing is certain, in regard to self-definition, however: what others call you does influence you. There are many examples, in the U.S., of people of "Negro" origin coming to the U.S. from cultures in which their African ancestry is societally defined differently and these people being frankly bewildered at the treatment they receive. No group epitomizes this more than the Puerto Rican immigrants to New York.[5]

**Questions**

1. The labeling theory has posited that primary labeling is the process of society labeling an individual (usually in a negative sense); secondary labeling involves the labeled individual's internalization of that negative primary label. Relate the labeling theory to the racial definitional processes of chapters five and six.

2. Differentiate among the various types of racial self-labeling:
   a) conscious self-labeling
   b) unconscious self-labeling

3. Which type of self-labeling specified in question (2) would correspond to secondary labeling? Explain your view.

4. Societal labeling is macro-sociological. True or False?

5. Self-labeling is micro-sociological. True or False?

## Notes

[1] See Herbert Hendin, Black Suicide; also see Abram Kardiner, The Mark of Oppression. These are two classic studies on the negative results of racism.

[2] Myrdal, An American Dilemma, posited that white guilt over the crimes committed against Blacks made them aware that "freedom" and "equality" were hypocritical concepts.

[3] I am 5'10" tall. Because this has less of a significance in the U.S. than my membership in a racial category, it enters into my self concept less.

[4] For a concise, brief look at the positive ways in which African-Americans respond to the racist, racially defining whites of the U.S., see Jim Haskins and Hugh F. Butts, The Psychology of Black Language. Blacks have also used the option of simply naming themselves different racial labels than the ones society gave them, as did happen in the 1960's with the shift to the term "Black" from "Negro." The Puerto Rican, who in New York is defined by white society as "Hispanic," may self-label himself as white.

[5] See Elena Padilla, Up From Puerto Rico; also Joseph P. Fitzpatrick, Puerto Rican Americans: The Meaning of Migration to the Mainland, Fitzpatrick also observes factors which caused racial definition of a different order than that of the U.S. in the Puerto Rican society of the island.

# CHAPTER 7

## Conclusion

Racial definition can be used by biologically based scientists or physical anthropologists, social scientists, the arbiters of society and persons being defined for different reasons. Rarely do these different definers take the time to see the relationship of their type of racial definition to another type. Below is a diagram showing definition typologies:

| Definition Type | Definer | Purpose | Effect |
|---|---|---|---|
| Scientific | Biologist, Anthropologist | Quest for truth, latent racism. | More scientific knowledge, justification for racism. |
| Social | Social Scientist | To investigate what the social scientist sees that society considers important. | More sociological knowledge of the groups being studied, more knowledge of in-group/out-group relations.[1] |
| Societal | Significant groups, institutions or persons | Control, exploitation, cooptation, description. | Various type of self-definition. Inequality. |
| Self | Person being defined by significant others | Orientation of self, defense mechanisms. | Possible pathologies, benefits. |

A Racial definition divergence / two stories

| Item 1 | Item 2 |
| --- | --- |
| John Smith, a man in Raleigh, N.C. with West African, French, English and Amerindian ancestors | Juan Mendes, a man in Bahia Brazil with West African, French, Portuguese and Amerindian ancestors. |
| Is defined North American Colored by the physical anthropologist for the purpose of classifying him according to genetic grouping. | Is defined South American Colored, for the purpose of classifying him according to genetic grouping, by the physical anthropologist. |
| Is classed Black by the sociologist because the sociologist is aware that this is his label in society. | Is classed mestizo by the sociologist because the sociologist is reasonably certain that this is his societal label. |
| Is classed Black by the State of North Carolina, the federal government and other societal agencies as well as U.S. folk culture for the ultimate purpose of cooptation of poor whites, relegation of a whole grouping of persons into inferior status. | Is classed white by his church for descriptive purposes as he is fairly light skinned. |
| Classifies himself on two levels, subconscious and conscious. Subconsciously, he classes himself as an undesirable in the U.S. because that is his label. This is secondary labeling.[2] Consciously he defines himself as Afro-American in order to identify himself in African terms in an effort to find his cultural identify.[3] | Classifies himself as a Brazilian white, which is about as significant to him as his occupation. |

**Question(s)**

1. What is your
   a) scientific race classification?
   b) social science race classification?
   c) societal race classification?
   d) self-definition of race?
      1) conscious
      2) unconscious (this will involve a guess)

OPTIONAL QUESTION:

2. Do you think race classifications are necessary? Why?

## Notes

[1] See Gordon Allport, The Nature of Prejudice.

[2] See Howard S. Becker, Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance; also Kai T. Erikson, "Notes on the Sociology of Deviance;" Edwin M. Schur, Crimes Without Victims; Stanton Wheeler and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., Juvenile Delinquency, Its Prevention and Control; Richard D. Schwarz and Jerome H. Skolnick, "Two Studies of Legal Stigma."

[3] Alex Haley, Roots. Haley's effort was, in essence, an attempt to change or enhance his racial self-definition.

## GLOSSARY

| | |
|---|---|
| **achieved status** | position in society gained through one's own effort |
| **ascribed status** | position in society as defined by others |
| **Blacks** | Africans, African-Americans and their descendants in the U.S. |
| **caste** | class distinction based on birth |
| **cline** | geographic zone |
| **collateral relative** | a relative not in one's line of descent |
| **corporate group** | a group whose members act as its representatives |
| **ethnic group** | group based on common culture |
| **genotype** | a person's description based on his heredity |
| **Hispanics** | U.S. euphemism for persons of Latin culture |
| **hybrid** | person of mixed genetic racial background |
| **hypodescent** | social practice whereby the offspring of parents of unequal social status is accorded the status of the parent with the lower status |
| **lineal relative** | a relative in one's line of descent |
| **macro-sociology** | the sociology of large groupings |
| **micro-sociology** | the sociology of face-to-face interaction |
| **monogenist view** | the belief that all races ultimately descended from a common ancestor |
| **mulatto** | offspring of an African and a European; occasionally this term will designate persons with African blood but large amounts of European ancestry |
| **phenotype** | a person's description based on his appearance |
| **polygenist view** | the belief that all races descended from several beginnings |
| **taxonomy** | classification, especially of biological categories |
| **whites** | Euro-Americans with no African ancestry |

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